



Winter, 2006

Volume 9, Number 3

Training and News for the Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service

ACS Redefines Mission and Organization

New Structure Will Better Prepare ACS to Meet the Needs of Seattle's Communities and Government Agencies in Times of Emergencies

By Mark Sheppard, N7LYE, ACS Director

At the January 25 business and training meeting Mark Sheppard and Jim Doub, the newly appointed Seattle Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) Deputy Director introduced and discussed the new ACS organization, assignment of key personnel and a change in strategy for better providing services to the city and its citizens. Please see the organizational diagram on page 5 which identifies the structure and personnel assigned. The organization is divided in to two main branches: 1. Communication Services and 2. Staff Support

Communications Services

Incorporating what works well into shaping a new approach for the future

The biggest change is our approach to service delivery. Previously we attempted to build teams geographically with the intention of setting up communication posts at the 23 or more community centers across the city. We have never been able to recruit adequate numbers of volunteers in the central, south east and south west communities of the city. We have

re-thought our deployment model where we send a couple of ACS volunteers to meet with Seattle Disaster Aid & Response Team (SDART) runners at a community center, take their requests for assistance and forward the messages to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). In a real disaster it would be unrealistic to expect ACS volunteers to work alone without the support of other city resources. This could be unsafe and the volunteers would likely become quickly overwhelmed.

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QRV?



QRV? = "Are you prepared?"

QRV? is the Newsletter of the Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service, City of Seattle, Emergency Management

Seattle ACS Nets

General net: meets weekly on Mondays at 7:00 p.m.—Bill Ehler K7NZV Net Manager
 Training/Technical net: meets weekly on Saturdays at 10:00 a.m.—George Boswell K7YHB Net Manager
 146.96 MHz PSRG repeater/-600 KHz offset/103.5 tone

Seattle ACS Frequency Plan

Program your radios so they always transmit the indicated tone. We rely on this for automatic access to supporting systems.

Check-in & Event Coordination Frequency

146.96 MHz repeater/-600 KHz offset/103.5 tone

*In case of repeater failure use 146.96 simplex with 103.5 tone. You will be assigned an operating frequency for passing traffic.
 We want to keep the check-in and coordination frequency as clear as possible.*

Operating frequencies

These frequencies are to be used for passing message traffic between field posts and the Seattle EOC.

UHF repeaters: Primary System

443.650 MHz ACS-North repeater. Tone 141.3 Hz (Xmt and Rcv) Primary area served: Northeast and Northwest zones
443.000 MHz ACS-Central repeater. Tone 141.3 Hz (Xmt and Rcv) Primary area served: Central East and Central West zones
441.800 MHz ACS-South repeater. Tone 141.3 Hz (Xmt and Rcv) Primary area served: Southeast and Southwest zones

VHF Simplex: Backup System

*ACS operates a north and south remote base that receives and transmits on our two designated simplex frequencies.
 Tones are mandatory.*

146.56 MHz ACS-VHF North. Simplex. Tone 103.5 Hz (Xmt and Rcv)

Planned service area: Northwest, Northeast, and Central-East zones

147.58 MHz ACS-VHF South. Simplex. Tone 103.5 Hz (Xmt and Rcv)

Planned service area: Southwest, Southeast, and Central-West zones

Six Meter Repeater – used for special operations – 53.250 MHz tone 100 Hz.

State & County Nets

Washington State Emergency meets Mondays at 5:30 p.m. Saturdays at 9:00 a.m. 3.985 MHz
 King County ARES meets Sundays at 8:00 p.m. 146.82 MHz (tone 103.5)

Please direct inquiries about the Auxiliary Communication Service to:

Mark Sheppard, N7LYE ACS Manager

Seattle EOC 2320 4th Avenue,

Seattle, WA 98121-1718

voice - 206 684 5027 FAX - 206 470 6715 Mark.Sheppard@Seattle.Gov

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Please direct letters, articles, and inquiries about **QRV?** to the editor:

Peter Smith N7BYP (206) 284-2098, n7byp@arrl.net

ACS Website: www.cityofseattle.org/eoc/acs

From the Editor

New Tricks

When I heard that we were being asked become certified as ARRL Level I Emcomm hams class to qualify for ACS I will freely admit to having second thoughts about it. After all, I've been in the Seattle ACS from the beginning and have participated in many ACS events including the 1999 WTO festivities. The old saying, "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" came immediately to mind.

I'm here to tell you that I was wrong. After attending the ARRL Level I Emcomm class taught very ably by Brian Daly, WB7OML, I discovered that I indeed learned "new tricks" and consider myself a better ACS volunteer because of my newly acquired ARRL Level I Emcomm certification.

Of course, much of the class content was familiar. Even so, reviewing that material caused me to think of what I knew about emergency communications in new ways and how to employ my technical and communications skills in better ways. In addition to the familiar, I also was introduced to new material that I'm sure will be helpful. In summary, this class was definitely worthwhile and something I recommend highly to others in our organization.

So there you have my personal testimonial for this class. I

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Training Topics

Hello fellow ACS members,

We have been working on a training plan for ACS for the past few months and presented the plan (in the form of a training matrix) at our last training meeting at the West Precinct on January 25th. You can find a copy of the matrix on our website.

This plan is driven by our desire to have well-qualified and skilled people with a common knowledge base on board and to go when needed.

We have established four training levels in our plan. Every position in our organization is aligned with one of these training levels. Here is a brief description of each level:

- Level 1- For key leadership positions interfacing with other government and emergency communications organizations.
- Level 2- For internal leadership positions.
- Level 3- For radio operators in non leadership roles.
- Level 4- For ACS support personnel without radio licenses.

There is a lot of work to do to make this plan happen but there are a few things each of us can do now that are necessary for all levels of training.

- Attend the CommAcademy April 1 and 2. We'd like everyone to avail themselves of this excellent opportunity to be exposed to a wide range of topics rele-

vant to ACS. You can sign up on line at <http://www.commacademy.org/>

- Sign up and take IS-100 Introduction to Incident Command System course on line. This quick course (2 hrs) is well done and gives an excellent overview of how NIMS works. You can sign up at <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is100.asp>
- Take the ARRL Level 1 EmComm course. We will offer it again in the fall but it is available online through ARRL. More information is available at <http://www.arrl.org/cce/courses.html#ec001>
- Make sure your go-kits are ready to GO.

Enough for now. Stay tuned to our nets and website for more information on training.

73

Jim Doub
K6TKU

K7YHB's Katrina Assistance Acknowledged

Our own George Boswell's help in relaying messages for Katrina victims is noted in the December 2005 issue of *World Radio*. Tnx to Bill Dockstader W7LSK for relaying this info to *QRV?* and congrats to you, George, for your excellent work with SATERN! -----

Changes, from Page 1

In our new framework we look to area team leaders to develop local knowledge of the community, its resources and facilities as well as recruit hams as ACS members. When necessary to deploy ACS in an emergency, teams would be assembled from across the city and sent to work with other city resources as part of an area command structure located at designated command posts. We also want to expand our capacity and capabilities in providing staff support to the Seattle EOC, the Mobile Communications Center and Operations Centers operated by city departments and other local government agencies. These specialty teams will be recruited and trained from the ACS general membership.

Leadership appointments in the Communications Services Branch of ACS

We want thank the following ACS members for accepting the following leadership posts: Joel Ware, EOC Comm-Center Manager; Bill Dockstader, Comm-Center Logistics coordinator; EOC Comm Team Leads – Alex Berteau, Blue Team Lead and Mat Thomas, Green Team Lead; George Boswell, Community Support Manager; Bill Ehler, acting NW Team Lead; Don Moore, NE Team Lead; John Lever, Assistant NE Team Lead; Don Deibert, CE Team Lead; and Chris Osburn, SE Team Lead.

Staff Support

The technical, administrative and management systems that support the organization and service delivery mission.

Please look at the right side of the organizational chart. These Staff functions are the glue that keeps the organization together and provides the communication flow to the members via the newsletter *QRV?*, the website and the scheduled weekly nets. We have added a couple of new key positions: First, a Technical Systems Manager to head a team to care for our equipment at the Comm-center and elsewhere, oversee our repeaters (equipment and coordination), our frequency plan, be trustee for our station license and coordinate our digital strategy. And second, a Membership Systems Manager to handle the registration of members via our database to track our experience and training.

Leadership appointments in the Staff Support Branch of ACS

We want thank the following ACS members for accepting the following leadership posts: Mike Tyler, Technical Systems Team Manager; Paula Weir, Membership Systems Manager; Bill Ehler, Net Manager; Pete Smith, Newsletter Editor; Paula Weir, website Manager; Jim Doub, Inter-Organizational Liaison Coordinator (Acting)

I have appointed Jim Doub as Deputy ACS Director. Jim

has lead the development of ACS's new training and credentialing program and has made many contributions to the organizational structuring, policy framework and the professionalism of ACS. Jim and Mark will work together to forward the plans of the new organization and continue to move ACS on the path of continual improvement. Thank you to Jim for accepting this appointment. If you are interested in joining one of the specialty teams or applying for one of the leadership posts please contact the manager of that function or Jim Doub or Mark Sheppard.

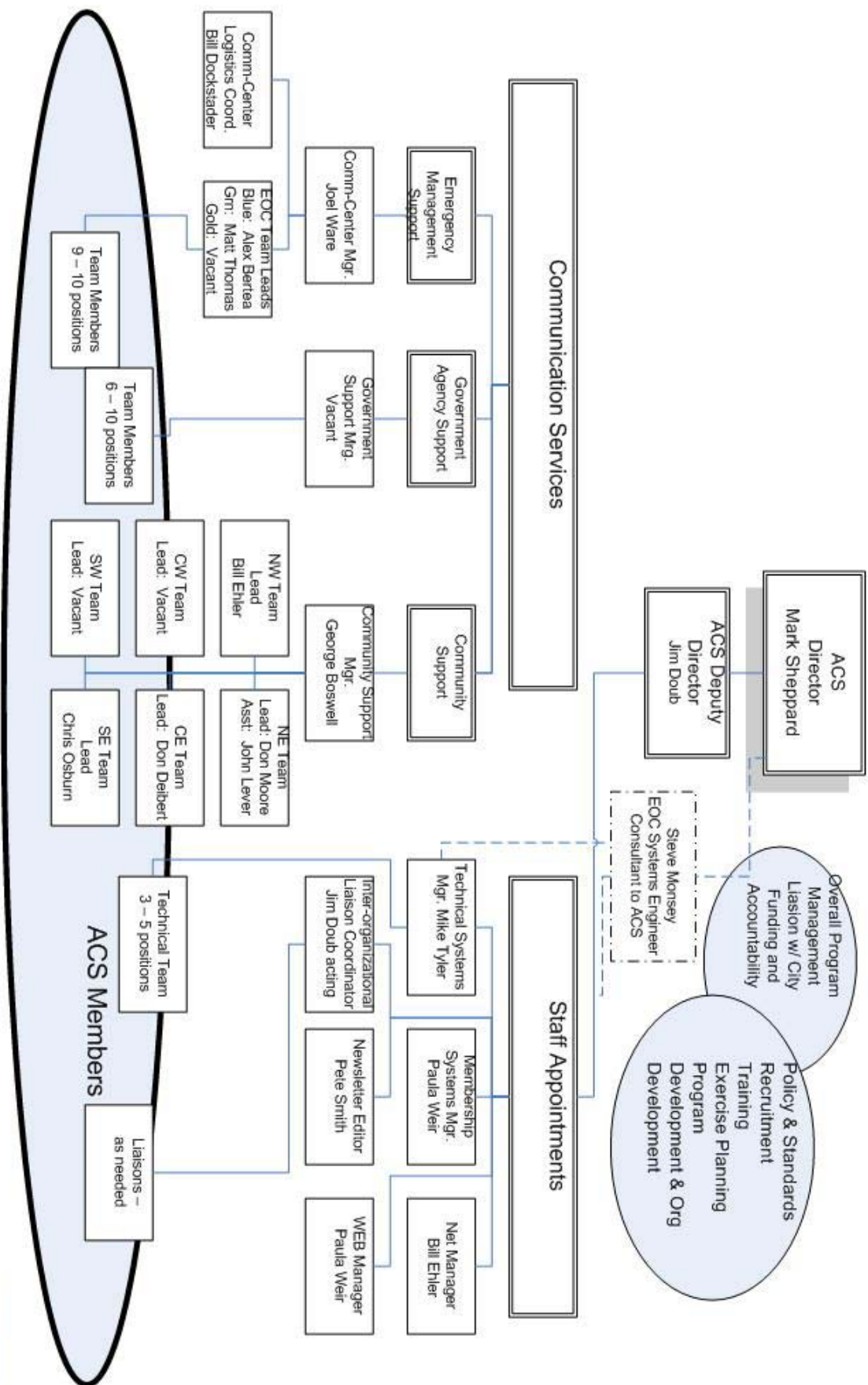
The January 25 meeting covered several other topics – here is the agenda:

1. Introductions (Mark)
2. Training Topics
 - Frequency Plan (Jim)
 - HTs & HT Programming (Jim)
3. Batteries, Adapters, etc. (Mark)
4. Antennas & Adapters (Mark)
5. Future Directions ACS Digital (Bill, George & Steve)
6. Business Topics
7. Training Matrix (Jim)
8. Organization Update (Mark)
9. EmComm Course (Brian 5)
10. Calendar and next meeting scheduled for Saturday February 25 9-12:00 at a local

Plan now to attend the Communications Academy 2006, April 1-2, 2006. Additional info. at: <http://www.commacademy.org/>

Seattle ACS Proposed Organization

Saturday, February 11, 2006



Personal Profile

Mat Marcus KV2N

In this issue of QRV? we're featuring a somewhat different personal profile. We're start in the usual way by highlighting Mat Marcus' KV2N amateur radio and other interests. In addition we'll find out more about Mat's volunteer work as a radio operator in the Gulf Coast right after hurricane Katrina, but more about that later.

Mat's involvement with amateur radio began with a desire work with technology in a direct, "hands on" kind of way. You see, Mat makes his living as a programmer, an occupation he describes as one that deals primarily with complex abstract ideas. Mat wanted a more direct, as he noted a "do-ing" kind of experience, and amateur radio came to mind. Like many hams, he first received a novice ticket, then with the demands of job and family, let that novice ticket expire before deciding to get back in to radio at a later time. That he did and now Mat enjoys an extra class license.

Also, like many of us, Mat received an invitation to join ACS through one of the mailings

sent out to stimulate interest in our emergency communication service. He attended an ACS orientation meeting where he met Mark N7LYE and George K7YHB and since they didn't scare him off (*just kidding >>grin<< -ed.*) he joined up and is a part of our organization.

Mat has a variety of radios in his shack, an area in the upper level of his home that is shared with computing equipment used for work as a programmer for Adobe. His rigs include a variety of HF, UHF, and VHF ht's and desktop model radios. I noticed several antennas ready for outdoor mounting. One that grabbed my attention was a compact multi band vertical that is tuned by its transceiver. (*A note to myself: I'm going to have to look into one of those. They would be great for portable, field operations. -ed.*)

As a member of the ARRL, Mat receives helpful information from the ARRL RSS feed as well as publications dealing with emergency communications publications. As you might guess, as a member of the ARRL, *QST* is one of his favorites.

Away from radios, Mat takes pleasure in running and wilderness experiences. He particularly enjoys time with his family, especially electronics building projects with his son.

Now let's turn to Mat's experiences as a disaster relief radio operator. After hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf coast, while working at home, Mat listened to EchoLink, a computer based service for hams that combines traditional radio transmissions with voice over internet protocols. EchoLink included channels containing radio transmissions from the areas affected by

H u r r i c a n e Katrina and while listening, he heard someone observe that much help was needed. Mat heard this call and responded by putting his name in an ARRL database for volunteers. At the same time, he began negotiations for an extended absence from work and started to research radio equipment he



Mat Marcus KV2N

Photo by Pete Smith N7BYP

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Profile, from Page 6

would need to acquire as well as explore airline schedules to the hurricane Katrina area,

Mat freely admits responding to this call for assistance with some fear and trepidation. He had never worked directly in emergency situations and believed he might lack some of the leadership and technical skills necessary. Nevertheless, when the ARRL asked him to go immediately to the disaster area, that's just what he did, after some highly appreciated last-minute training from George and Bill.

Upon arrival in the disaster area he was sent to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, far enough north to escape the brunt of the hurricane but sustaining much damage nevertheless. At Hattiesburg, Mat became a backup net control dispatcher for the Red Cross, directing emergency response vehicles to areas of need.

After a week at Hattiesburg, he was reassigned to Hancock County Mississippi, where Katrina made landfall and most probably the hardest hit area. The regular Emergency Operations Center (EOC) had been destroyed by the storm so a temporary EOC was established near Stennis Airport outside of Bay St. Louis, in one of the few buildings that, because it had been hardened for storms, was still structurally secure enough to house the EOC.

The entire county was a shambles. Stores and homes were destroyed and the only way to get provisions to the people was through the use of

"points of distribution" or PODs. At the PODs scattered throughout the county, desperately needed foodstuffs, medical supplies, and other provisions were distributed to survivors of the storm. Hams at the PODs sent requests for supplies and services via radio to the EOC, where Mat and others maintained net control operations. At the Hancock County EOC, Mat acted as officer in charge of a team of a couple dozen amateur radio operators, overseeing network operations and interfacing with the various ESF at the EOC. In addition to relaying official requests from the PODs, hams there also became aware of critical needs of individuals. Whenever possible, they found ways to meet those individual needs through their radio networks. As you might imagine the situation was characterized by Mat as "hectic and crazy" leaving him little time for sleep.

In many ways, as Mat noted, because hams had knowledge of both area-wide and individual survivor needs, they became the "face of the people" at the EOC.

Before returning home, Mat participated in debriefings as well as training that took advantage of his computer skills as he set up satellite-based emergency communications links.

I asked Mat what advice he might offer that would help us become better prepared for service as emergency communicators. I waited as Mat leaned back and thought for a few moments. Finally, he said that there were many lessons to be learned and that he intended to

enumerate them, but if he had to come up with a single bit of advice it would be this: "do whatever it takes." By this, Mat means that when you respond to the call for help, be willing to do whatever is asked of you whether it involves radio communications work or not. I have heard this same advice, by the way, from others experienced in emergency relief work. Yes, we have radio skills and stand ready to use them if needed. That being said, we should also be ready to help in any way we are directed.

Mat derived much from his relief work. He discovered leadership traits he never realized he possessed. He was able to make critical decisions quickly and effectively. His radio skills were also put to good use. Mat also had the satisfaction of knowing that his response made a difference, that it had positive effects in the lives of some of the people who were victimized by this terrible storm.

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Editor, from Page 3

urge all of you who haven't taken this class yet to do so at your earliest convenience. The class is offered online as well as in traditional classroom settings.

Whatever the case, whether on line or in class, do make it a priority to take this class. Yes, it's a requirement for ACS membership but more than that, it will make you a better emergency communicator. Take it from this old dog, there are definitely very worthwhile new tricks to be learned! — — — — —

Noteworthy ACS Events



Photo by Pete Smith N7BYP

Many ACS members attended the ARRL Level I EmComm class on January 28th and 29th. Pictured here is Brian Daly, WB7OML, leading the class at a north city SPU facility.

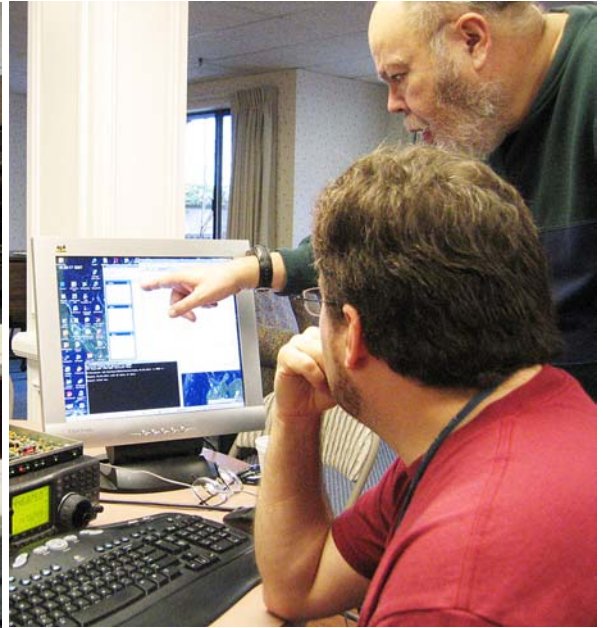


Photo by Pete Smith N7BYP

Bill Dockstader, W7LSK, and Steve Monsey, N0FPF, at packet radio meeting held on January 14th. Eight ACS member attended.

QRV? - Seattle ACS
Office of Emergency Management
Seattle Police Department
2320 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98121-1718